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THE OFFICIAL NATIONAL ORGAN

National News Letter

of PHI DELTA KAPPA

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ABEL J. McALLISTER, Managing Editor.

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A New Era

About ten years ago there was founded a new fraternity, committed to the belief that education is a science. Three groups of young men in three widely separated universities of the country took it upon themselves to organize chapters, and when in 1910 these united, admitting a fourth group, to form a national body, it was an important step in the history of Phi Delta Kappa.

A phase in the development of Phi Delta Kappa, second in importance only to the amalgamation meeting, was that of the San Francisco Council.

The various component groups had at different times stated the purpose of the fraternity to be "to remedy the lack of close fellowship on the part of teachers"; to encourage the social attitude among its members, bringing them into closer bands of fellowship and co-operation; to promote personal acquaintance and friendship. Other purposes for which the organization had been established were stated to be the development and spread of the scientific study of education; the elevation of professional ideals; to encourage research along professional lines.

It will be noted that the honor "idea" is nowhere expressed, or implied, but the question early arose, and came up before the Philadelphia Council in 1913 but the issue was evaded, and matters remained as they were. The San Francisco Council has finally frankly avowed the three-fold purpose of our Fraternity. It now devolves upon us to maintain a sane balance among these three.

From the beginning of Phi Delta Kappa there have been held two extreme views as to the degree of uniformity that shall obtain in the transaction of our business, more especially of our ritual. The one group has insisted that there shall be the greatest amount of freedom and a minimum of ritualistic work. The other group has just as consistently taken the stand that there shall be practical if not entire uniformity in the rituals of all chapters, and that the ritual shall be more or less elaborate. Committees appointed to propose a ritual have failed thus far to present one that met with favor from all the delegates, due, I take it, to the fact that the members of the committee were too far removed from each other for effective co-laboration.

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But the California and Standford Chapters seem to have come nearest to the goal in the installation given before the last Council. The Comittee has asked to be continued, and will probably present its findings at the next Council, if not before.

It has been said that one of the strongest fraternal organizations, if not the strongest now in existence owes its strength in very large measure to the almost absolute uniformity of its ritual, which uniformity is said to be worldwide in extent. If this is true, then it were wise to follow in its footsteps. But even if not true, surely it can not detract from the strength of the Fraternity to have one ritual for all chapters. When the committee presents its report, let us be generous enough, and broad enough to give the plan a fair trial.

The question of honorary membership, too, has been discussed at several Councils, and again the San Francisco Council has met the issue squarely. It was very evidently the intention of the delegates that the Council should have a real voice in the granting of such memberships, that their vote should not be merely formal or confirmatory. Yet in all the cases that have come before the Council, the local chapters have taken matters so far into their own hands that they have seriously embarrassed the Council, and if the members had been disposed to abide by the letter rather than the spirit of the rule, matters would have been still more embarrassing to the Chapters. It must be conceded that the conferring of honorary membership is very definitely a double function, altho in a sense it is the local chapter, in a much larger sense it is the national organization that grants the honors. The Chapter is, in a way, the nominating, the Council the electing body. From this

standpoint, it is manifestly unwise to inform the prospective member that his name has even been proposed, but rather to wait until the whole question has been definitely decided, before communicating with him at all.

In this connection it may be said that the Chapters should look well to the timber they choose to build up our honorary group. A man may loom large locally, but he should be a power in the educational circles of his state, at least, to merit consideration for this high honor. Moreover, it will not do to cheapen the honor in any way. We insist on unanimity in the election of an ordinary member. Shall we insist on nothing more in the case of an honorary member? Faculty members have always been eligible, I believe, to associate membership. Shall we now elect men to honorary membership merely because they are members of the faculty? We have the privilege of electing two honorary members each year. Is it therefore necessary to exercise that right, and increase the honorary membership by thirty each year? Would it not be more dignified to exercise our right sparingly, and make the honor one really to be coveted by the big men in education? It does not seem to me to be a desirable state of affairs to make the ratio of honorary members to regular members as high as one to four. **

By far the most important step taken by the last Council is the establishment of a National Magazine. It gives us for the first time what we have long needed, a medium where we can meet on common ground for the exchange of ideas and the expression of opinions. It will enable the young men in school to learn of the actual problems to be met with in the field, and to get from the men on the ground the benefit of their experience.

It will give the men in the field a chance to know what is going on at the "old school," to keep in touch with the change in personnel of faculty and fraternity; to learn of brothers in Phi Delta Kappa who are within reaching distance. In short it will enable us all to keep in closer touch, each with the other, than has been possible thus far.

I have never been seriously opposed to the idea of National Magazine, but neither have I, in the past, strongly advocated it largely on account of financial difficulties that I apprehended. We owe our opportunity to try the plan, largely, if not entirely, to the unselfish devotion of our Managing Editor, Brother McAllister, and it is the duty of every one

of us to support the venture to the best of our ability. The position of Editor is a thankless one at best, and when there is added to this the financial responsibility, without adequate assurance of financial return, it merits our whole-hearted support. If we do not see this at a glance, words of mine will fail to convince.

F. W. SCHACHT,
National President.

** Footnote: I am taking Chicago Chapter as an example. There are about thirty-two members, on an average. Assuming that the personnel changes entirely every four years, that eight members leave each year. If now, two honorary members are elected and nominated, that makes the ratio one to four. In smaller chapters the proportion will be correspondingly greater.

The Sixth Annual Council Meeting

Some of the matters acted upon at the last Council meeting were as follows: The matter of coat-of-arms for the fraternity which had been laid over from last year's convention was taken up and settled to the satisfaction of all concerned. The design which was adopted is now in the hands of the engraver. An identification card was adopted mainly for the use of travelers. A membership certificate was also provided for.

At last a national magazine is to become a reality. Through the generous offer of Brother A. J. McAllister of the Kansas Chapter we are able to bring this about. Inasmuch as the venture will be financed mainly through subscriptions, it is up to each and every member of the Fraternity to support Brother McAllister to the extent of sending in his subscription.

One new active Chapter was provided for to be located at the New York Uni-

versity. The Kansas Alumni Chapter was also allowed.

The Council made provision for a History and Directory of the Fraternity. In order effectively to carry this out and make such work permanent, a fundamental change was made in the offices of the Fraternity. The office of Member-at-Large was abolished and in its place was substituted the office of Historian who is to have complete charge of the historical records of the Fraternity, the Chapters and the individual members.

The Council incorporated into the Constitution the gist of the so-called "Stanford Resolution," which attempted to define the nature and purpose of the Fraternity in its three-fold aspect—fraternal, professional and honorary. In the past great difficulty has been experienced in promulgating an adequate statement of the aims of the Fraternity